

Doing Collaborative Community Based Research: On the ground in Kingston

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The Welcoming Communities Initiative (WCI)

A multidisciplinary project that brings universities and communities into a research partnership to enrich 2nd- and 3rd-tier (medium-sized and small) Ontario cities by equipping them to attract, retain, and integrate immigrants and visible minorities into an inclusive environment.

WCI goals:

1. Strengthen the capacity of municipalities and the service and voluntary sectors to contribute to equitable and inclusive communities
2. Understand barriers to social cohesion, and test and implement strategies for creating and sustaining communities in which all members feel comfortable and valued.
3. Share findings and recommendations among community organizations, municipalities, policy-makers, academics, students, and the general public in Ontario, Canada, and internationally

The Kingston Context:

- Relatively slow population growth
- Aging population
- Immigration rate lower than overall population growth
- Long established European immigrant communities
- Recent, growing visible minority communities

Demographic Overview for Kingston 2006

Table 1: Demographic Overview for Kingston 2006

	Kingston	Ontario
Median Age	40	39
Average population growth 2001-2006	3.8	6.6
Immigrant population	12.44%	28%
Newcomers as a percentage of population 2001-2006	1.42%	4.78%

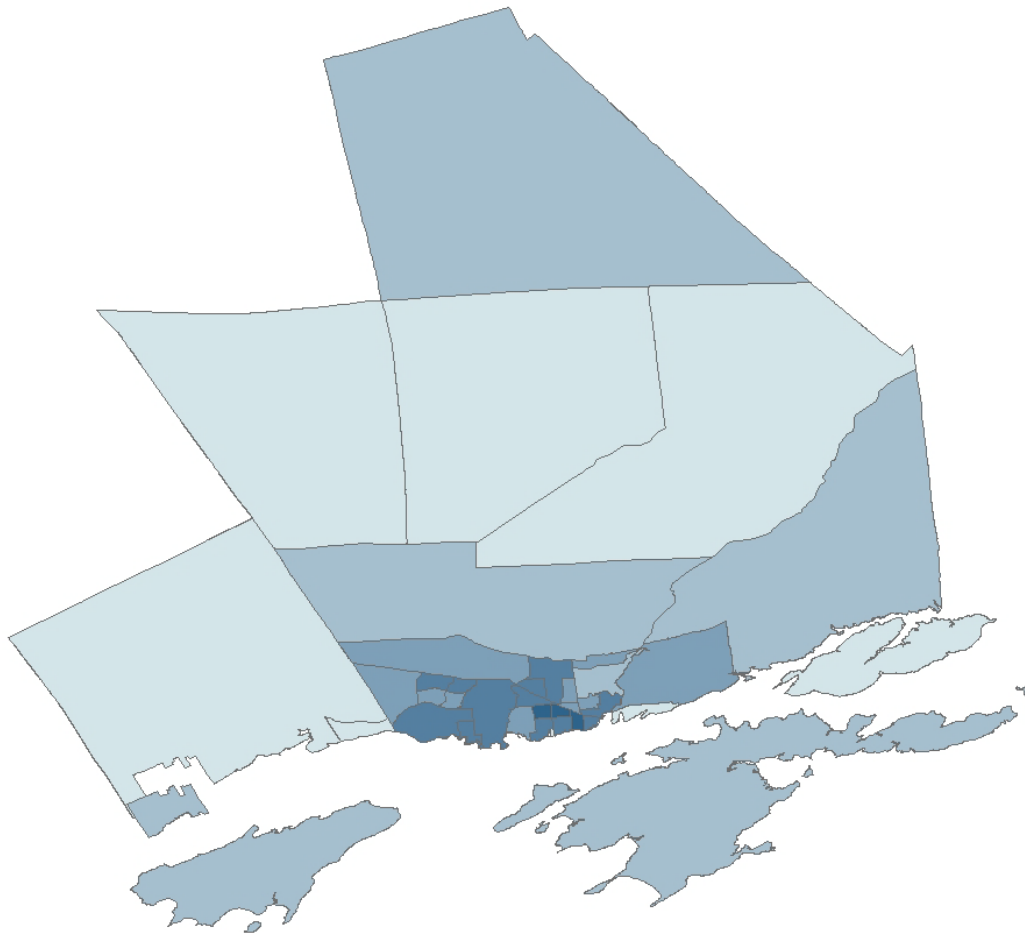
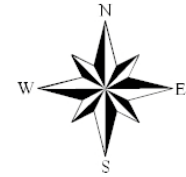
Total population and immigrant population of Kingston 1991-2006

	1996	2001	2006	% change 1996-2006
Total Population	143,415	146,838	152,360	6.24%
Immigrant Population	17,840	17,680	18,505	3.73%
Immigrant population as a % of total	12.44%	12.04%	12.15%	-2.33%
Aboriginal Population	1,320	2,205	2,360	78.79%
Aboriginal Population as a % of total	0.92%	1.50%	1.55%	68.48%

Place of birth	1996	Rank	2006	Rank
UK	5,155	1	4,640	1
Portugal	1,565	2	1,530	2
USA	1,455	3	1,525	3
Germany	1,125	4	1,060	4
Netherlands	995	5	980	5
China (PRC)	540	6	870	6
India	425	9	500	7
Italy	480	8	465	8
Poland	505	7	410	9
Philippines	380	10	330	10
Pakistan	135	22	280	11
Greece	290	12	245	12
Korea, South	50	36	220	13
El Salvador	150	19	210	14
Egypt	155	17	210	15
Hong Kong	235	13	210	16
Iran	140	21	210	17
Viet Nam	295	11	195	18
Denmark	185	16	170	19
Ireland (Eire)	190	15	170	20

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Spatial distribution of immigrants in Kingston in 2006



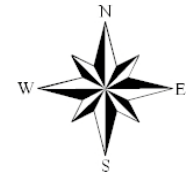
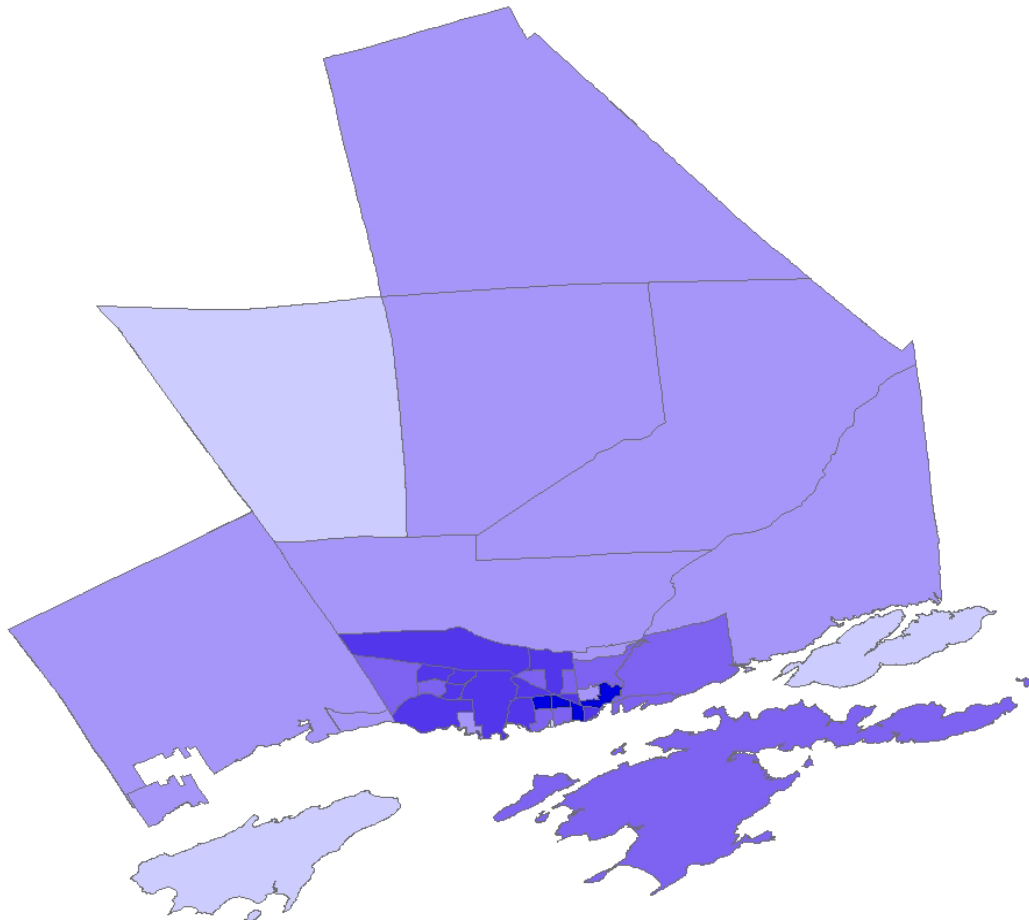
Legend

Percentage of immigrants to total population (%)

- 0.00% - 6.96%
- 6.97% - 11.08%
- 11.09% - 14.02%
- 14.03% - 18.03%
- 18.04% - 26.23%

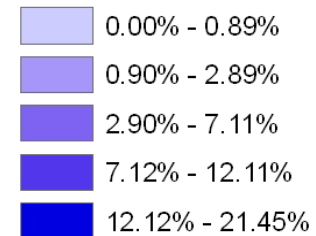
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Spatial distribution of visible minorities in Kingston in 2006



Legend

Percentage of visible minorities to total population (%)



Local Immigrant Partnership (LIP)

- Immigrant Services Kingston Area (ISKA)
- Kingston Employment Youth Services (KEYS) (includes LINC)
- Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO)

Kingston Immigrant Partnership (KIP)

- LIP
- WCI – Queen's
- Kingston Web Portal (City of Kingston)

Community consultation themes:

- Need for information on adapting to life in Kingston
- Barriers to labour force integration
 - Lack of (appropriate) jobs
 - Credentialism
 - Lack of retraining opportunities
 - Misunderstanding/discrimination by employers
- Discomfort/racism in the larger society (e.g., buses)

Community consultation issues:

- Disentangling service provider/newcomer opinions
- Power relations in focus groups
- Contradictions between immigrant attraction and removing barriers to integration
- Uncritical perspectives on culture – whose culture is it and who defines it?
- Reaching those who are not part of the conversation

Discussion:

- The role of the “academic” in facilitating critical understanding
- “Celebrating diversity” as a tool for removing barriers
- Participatory democracy, communicative competence, and politics of difference